

**THE PUNISHER #55**  
**(Master, 11-13-07)**

PAGE ONE

1.

Close up on a hardback book, a new release, seen through the window of a bookstore. The title is clearly legible:

VALLEY FORGE, VALLEY FORGE

And the subtitle, smaller:

THE SLAUGHTER OF A U.S. MARINE GARRISON AND THE BIRTH OF  
THE PUNISHER

And the author's name:

MICHAEL GOODWIN

The title of the book gives us our story title, so all we need lettered below the pic is:

PART ONE

Garth Ennis - writer

Goran Parlov - artist

Etc.

PAGE TWO

1.

Text page. Please note italics.

(Each of these text pages will be got up to look like pages from a typical non-fiction book- on each comic page, a text page from the book with a photo from the illo section in the middle of the book beneath it. The text page should overlap the photo page slightly. Let's try to make the text look like it's printed on the book page, not just dropped on it at a bad angle. Finally, each text page will also have a number at the bottom, in this case 5)

*Trans. 001056/TS/121/USMC*

*10/30/71 0917 LCL*

*VF10: -- three bravo, Tusker three bravo, how do you read me, over? Tusker*

*three bravo, this is Valley Forge one zero, do you copy?*  
*Over.*

*T3B: Valley Forge one zero, this is Tusker three bravo, sorry we lost you. Can*  
*hardly read (static)*

*VF10: Tusker three bravo, God dammit—*

*T3B: --quest you confirm (static)*

*10/30/71 0921 LCL*

*VF10: -- Forge, this is Valley Forge calling anyone out there, we are fucked, we*  
*need—*

*T3B: Valley Forge, this is Tusker three bravo, sorry again.*  
*Original message*  
*unclear, ah, can you confirm? Repeat, confirm request for*  
*airstrike*  
*soonest. Will pass up the line on confirmation, over.*

*VF10: Confirm, motherfucker, you motherfucker, they are killing our asses, they*  
*are killing us, we are being overrun, do you fucking get it?*  
*Oh Jesus*

*Christ, they're at the (unintelligible)*

*T3B: Valley Forge, this is Tusker three bravo, please stand by, over.*

*10/30/71 0924 LCL*

*T3B: Valley Forge, this is Tusker Leader, are you receiving? I say again, this is  
Tusker Leader, do you read me, over?*

*VF10: (static)*

*T3B: Valley Forge, this is Tusker Leader. Repeat your message, over.*

*VF10: (static)*

*T3B: Valley Forge, Valley Forge (loud static, transmission interrupted)*

PAGE THREE

1.  
Text page (7). Again, please note italics.

*Tusker Leader got no reply.*

*His was the last friendly voice the marines of Firebase Valley Forge ever heard- if, indeed, there was anyone alive in the vicinity of the radio to hear him. His transmission was the last the base received, just two words, repeated once: a name from the birth of America, spoken in a strange and far-off land.*

*Valley Forge, Valley Forge.*

*Some time after midnight on the thirtieth of October, 1971, three battalions of the North Vietnamese Army's 712<sup>th</sup> regiment, 321<sup>st</sup> division, began their assault on the Marine firebase. The defenders fought back tooth and nail. Outnumbered eight to one, completely cut off, out of range of friendly artillery and with local air support grounded by thunderstorms, they had been all but overwhelmed by nine thirty that morning.*

*It was around that time that a flight of U.S. Air Force F4 fighter-bombers, orbiting above the clouds in response to the marines' frantic calls for help, finally found a break in the weather. Observing Valley Forge to be overrun by NVA, they began dropping napalm and high explosive. Then, as more aircraft joined the attack, marker smoke was observed at the highest point on the firebase- where, it is believed, a desperate last stand was being made against the Vietnamese.*

*Late in the afternoon, when Huey transports of the Fifth Air Cavalry disgorged their troops on the isolated hilltop, they were met by a scene of utter devastation. Thousands of pounds of bombs and hundreds of gallons of napalm had been expended. Smouldering corpses lay everywhere, most burnt to the bone. The final bodycount ran to well over seven hundred; one hundred ninety-two Americans, an indefinite number of their opponents. An eyewitness described the resulting silence as "terrifying".*

*Standing in the middle of the carnage, bleeding from a dozen wounds, armed only with a broken rifle, was the sole survivor of the garrison. He was Captain Frank Castle. Years later, home again, he would face another nightmare: when he became the vigilante known as the Punisher.*

*Among the hundred ninety-two was Private First Class Stephen Albert "Stevie" Goodwin.*

*He was my big brother.*

PAGE FOUR

1.

Nick Fury sits facing us in a gloomy little bar, large bourbon- neat- on the table in front of him. He gazes offshot, surly, pissed off, slightly drunk. Frank's walking towards him further back, jacket zipped over the skull. Few drinkers at the bar in the background.

2.

Frank sits opposite him. They don't look at each other, Fury's still looking offshot.

1 Frank: FURY.

2 Fury: MMF.

3.

Fury drains his glass as the waitress arrives.

3 Waitress: WHAT CAN I GET YOU?

4 Frank: CLUB SODA.

5 Waitress: 'NOTHER BOOKER'S.

4.

With no ceremony whatsoever, Fury sets a large envelope on the table in front of Frank, eyes narrowed as he looks offshot in the same direction as before.

6 Fury: HERE.

7 " " YOU EVER THINK WE MIGHT HAVE SOMETHING  
COMING TO  
US FOR THIS SHIT?

8 Frank: WHAT SHIT?

5.

Close up on a TV on the wall above the bar. The news is on, footage of two wounded GIs being stretchered into a Blackhawk in Iraq, smoke from a burning Humvee filling the air. Others keep their heads well down. A caption at the bottom of the screen reads-

U.S. DEATHS TOP 4000

9 Off:        THAT.

PAGE FIVE

1.

Fury grimaces at the drink the waitress gives him. Frank's cool, not very animated.

1 Fury:                   FUCK... WE INVENT A WAR AND WE INVADE. AND HOW

                              MANY OF THEM ARE DEAD NOW, HALF A MIL OR SOMETHING  
                              LIKE THAT?

2 Frank:    DEPENDS WHO YOU BELIEVE.

2.

The waitress leaves. Fury is tired and grim, not much life to him.

3 Fury:                   LEAVES A LOT OF PISSED-OFF PEOPLE WITH NOTHING TO  
                              LOSE.

4 "       "        I DON'T KNOW WHAT IT'LL BE. GUY WITH SOMETHING  
IN A                   BRIEFCASE, WANDERING INTO TIMES SQUARE. A  
PLANE                AGAIN.

5 "       "        BUT WE'VE GOT SOMETHING COMING, THAT I KNOW.

3.

Frank looks at Fury, calm. Fury shrugs.

6 Frank:    YOU MEAN IT'S INEVITABLE, OR YOU MEAN WE DESERVE IT?

7 Fury:                   HUH. WELL.

8 "       "        I CAN THINK OF A COUPLE OF ASSHOLES I COULD  
STAND TO                SEE GETTING SUICIDE BOMBED. BUT WHAT  
TERRORIST EVER        TOOK OUT THE ASSHOLE HE ACTUALLY HAD A BEEF  
WITH?



4.

Fury swigs his bourbon. Frank remains calm, nothing much getting to him.

9 Fury: IT'S ALWAYS SOME GRUNT. SOME POOR  
FUCKING CIVILIAN.

10 Frank: SOUNDS LIKE YOU'RE LOSING YOUR FAITH.

5.

Frank only, watching us coolly but intently.

11 Off:                    CONSIDERING WHAT'S IN THAT ENVELOPE,  
MAYBE I AM.

12 “   “           MAYBE I'M GETTING TO BE LIKE YOU.

PAGE SIX

1.

Fury signals the waitress with his empty glass.

1 Fury:                   BECAUSE THEY CAN'T WAVE A FLAG AND LIE TO  
MY FACE

ANYMORE, I'LL TELL YOU THAT MUCH.

2.

Fury gazes bleakly at the table again. Bit more drunk now. Frank picks up the envelope, unconcerned. Not pissed off, just not interested.

2 Fury:                   MAYBE I SHOULD'VE DONE THREE TOURS IN-  
COUNTRY.

                  MIGHT'VE OPENED MY EYES A HELL OF A LOT  
SOONER.

3 "     "           BUT I WAS... SAVING THE FUCKING WORLD, OR  
SOMETHING...

4 Frank:     I'VE WORK TO DO.

3.

Fury looks up as Frank stands. The waitress arrives with another bourbon.

5 Fury:                   YOU KNOW THERE'S ANOTHER BOOK JUST CAME  
OUT ABOUT

YOU? MOSTLY THE STUFF THAT HAPPENED IN 'NAM?

6 Frank:     I NEVER READ THE BOOKS.

4.

Fury's eye narrows just a little, interested.

7 Fury:                   'COURSE NOT.

8 "     "           YOU GOING TO WASTE THOSE PRICKS?

5.

Frank tucks the envelope into his jacket, cool.

9 Frank:     DON'T KNOW FOR SURE.

10 “    “       MIGHT DO.

## PAGE SEVEN

1.  
Fury drains his glass yet again. Frank leaves in the background.

2.  
Pretty drunk now, Fury glares up past us, surly as hell.

3.  
His p.o.v: the TV again, troops on patrol in Baghdad.

4.  
Fury walks slowly towards the bar, where several tough-looking thug types are drinking beers and talking quietly.

5.  
Fury stands behind them and sneers, slow and surly, like he can hardly be bothered. Obviously drunk. They stop short, surprised and angry, can't quite believe this. At least two are much taller than him, a third his age. They're nearest.

1 Fury:               WHAT'RE YOU **FAGGOTS** LOOKING AT?

6.  
Frank walks coolly down the street towards us, doesn't turn as Fury is flung through the front window of the bar maybe twenty yards behind him, glass flying everywhere. Night.

PAGE EIGHT

1.

Day. A golf course. Long shot on eight men standing in front of four golf buggies. The others watch as one of the guys takes a shot, slices it badly, sends it flying off to one side.

1 Other:     OOOH!

2 “     “     PITIFUL.

2.

Close in. The crap golfer is nearest, gazing offshot, pathetic. He is in fact the wimpy little General from *Mother Russia*, the one Fury whipped with his belt in #17: Bobby. The others are the rest of the group of Air Force and Army Generals- wearing civilian clothes.

3 Bobby:     AW...

4 Other:     THERE'S NO QUESTION IT WAS BARRACUDA?

5 Other 2:   FINGERPRINTS.

3.

Close in on the other Generals. The nearest two are the fat one, Jake, and the one with the moustache, Kurt, both a little bleak.

6 Kurt:             HEAD WAS GONE. SO WERE THE HANDS, BUT NOT  
QUITE AS FAR.

7 “     “     IT WAS HIM, ALL RIGHT.

8 Jake:             FUCK...

4.

Bobby joins them. These three Generals are the leaders of the group, the other five just make up the numbers. We last saw the three together in #19, giving Rawlins shit.

9 Jake:             I THOUGHT IF ANYONE COULD GET THE JOB  
DONE, YOU KNOW?

10 Bobby: WE SHOULD NEVER HAVE GONE AFTER CASTLE. I  
SAID THAT ALL ALONG.

5.

Kurt raises an eye, seems to be the shrewdest of the three. Bobby grimaces.

11 Kury: IN POINT OF FACT, BOBBY, YOU ONLY STARTED  
SAYING THAT  
YOU'D AFTER THE RAWLINS TAPE ARRIVED. UP UNTIL THEN  
BEEN AS GUNG-HO ABOUT CASTLE AS ANY OF US.

12 " " OF COURSE, YOU HAD JUST BEEN WHIPPED LIKE AN  
ERRANT CHILD, COURTESY OF OUR OLD FRIEND FURY. THAT'S  
ENOUGH TO MAKE A MAN OF EVEN THE MILDEST  
MOUSE...

13 Bobby: WELL, LET ME THANK YOU ONCE AGAIN FOR YOUR  
HELP ON THAT OCCASION, **FELLAS!** SHITTING YOURSELVES  
AND  
STANDING BY WHILE THAT **ANIMAL** HALF-KILLED ME!

PAGE NINE

1.

Bobby, angry, melted into a flashback montage of *Mother Russia/Up is Down and Black is White*: the airliner being blown to bits by the missile impact (#17), Fury whipping the terrified Bobby with his belt (#17), Rawlins tied to the chair with blood pouring from his eyesocket, babbling pathetically to the camcorder on its tripod nearest (#24), all of it dominated by the grim Frank in Russian uniform, blazing away with his twin AKSUs.

1 Bobby:      THAT RUSSIAN DEBALE SHOULD HAVE BEEN THE  
MAKING                      OF US—INSTEAD IT'S A MILLSTONE AROUND OUR  
NECKS,                      IT'S GOING TO DROWN US ALL!

2 “      “      THAT TAPE HAS RAWLINS VOMITING OUT THE ENTIRE  
THING:                      THE EIGHT OF US, ARMY AND FUCKING AIR FORCE,  
                                 ACCESSORIES TO THE DEATHS OF A HUNDRED  
RUSSIAN                      SOLDIERS! TO SAY **NOTHING** OF CONSPIRING TO  
LAUNCH A                      **TERRORIST ATTACK ON MOSCOW!**

2.

Jake and Kurt look bleak. Bobby stops short, he and the others a bit edgy now.

3 Jake:                      BUT... CASTLE'S NOT TERRIBLY LIKELY TO USE  
THE TAPE, IS                      HE?

4 Kurt:                      BLACKMAIL NEVER REALLY HAVING BEEN THE  
PUNISHER'S                      STYLE...



PAGE TEN

1.

Wide view of the group. General sense of unease.

1 Other: OH, JESUS...

2 Bobby: THIS IS WHY I SAID IT WAS A BAD IDEA...

3 Other 2: WELL, WAIT A MINUTE: ARE WE ABSOLUTELY SURE  
HE' S  
COMING AFTER US?

2.

Close in. The guy seems pretty hopeful. Kurt is still bleak. Bobby glares.

4 Other: I MEAN IT HAPPENED IN CALIFORNIA: ALL WE GAVE  
BARRACUDA WAS THE S.A.S. FELLOW, MITCHELL, AND  
HE  
WAS IN THE U.K....

5 Kurt: I SEE WHAT YOU'RE SAYING. I JUST DON'T THINK  
WE CAN  
TAKE THE RISK.

6 Bobby: RIGHT, AND THAT'S EXACTLY WHAT GOT US IN  
TROUBLE IN  
THE FIRST PLACE, THAT LEAVE-NOTHING-TO-CHANCE  
SHIT!

3.

Pull back. Bobby fumes as he glares at the ground. Kurt holds his hands up for calm.

7 Bobby: WE SHOULD HAVE LEFT IT AT STALEMATE, HE HAS  
THE  
TAPE AND WE—

8 Kurt: BUT WE DIDN'T AND HERE WE ARE. WHAT NOW?

9 “ “ JAKE?

4.

Jake muses, thoughtful. One of the others frowns, smiling curiously.

10 Jake:     HOW DO WE STOP HIM, IS WHAT IT COMES DOWN  
TO...

11 Other:    UH... AM I MISSING SOMETHING HERE?

12 “    “        I MEAN BETWEEN US WE’VE GOT ABOUT TWELVE  
DIVISIONS,  
              NOT TO MENTION A HALF A DOZEN FIGHTER WINGS.  
THERE’S  
              NOT ONE OF US WITH LESS THAN TWO STARS ON HIS  
CAP.

5.

Jake raises an eye and the guy wilts a bit. Kurt looks thoughtful.

13 Jake:     NONE OF WHICH WE CAN EVEN DREAM OF  
EMPLOYING. IN  
              CASE YOU WERE THINKING OF LAUNCHING A B-2  
STRIKE ON  
              BROOKLYN.

14 Other:    WELL, NO... BUT...

15 Kurt:     THAT’S NOT THE ONLY THING.

PAGE ELEVEN

1.

Kurt only, quietly but intensely serious.

1 Kurt:               WHATEVER WE DECIDE TO DO, WE CAN'T HAVE  
WORD OF IT               SPREADING. NOT EVEN IN THE USUAL CIRCLES.

2 "       "           BECAUSE IF IT LOOKS LIKE WE CAN'T TAKE CARE OF  
OUR               OWN SHIT, OTHER PEOPLE WILL START TO WORRY  
ABOUT           THEIR PRIOR DEALINGS WITH US. PEOPLE WE'VE  
WORKED           WITH HIGHER UP THE CHAIN OF COMMAND, WHO  
CANNOT           AFFORD BLEMISHES OF ANY KIND.

3 "       "           THEY WILL BE ANGRY. AND WE WILL BE LEPERS.

2.

Kurt is cool. The others seem bleak, except for Jake. He and Kurt are slowly, subtly running the show.

4 Kurt:               AND I DOUBT I'M THE ONLY ONE WITH A  
CONSULTANCY               LINED UP IN FIVE YEARS TIME...

5 Jake:               POINT NUMBER THREE, BEFORE WE GET TOO  
FAR AHEAD OF               OURSELVES: HAS ANYONE HERE ACTUALLY SEEN  
COMBAT?

3.

Wide view. They look awkward. Bobby folds his arms. One guy raises a hand, hesitant.

6 Bobby:   MM.

7 One:               WELL—

8 Jake:               BLACKHAWK CRASH DOESN'T COUNT, JOE. OR  
HALF THE

BOYS ON THE ACTIVE LIST WOULD HAVE THE D.S.C.

4.

Bobby looks a bit feeble.

9 Bobby: WE LEFT THE POINT AFTER 'NAM... OR WE AVOIDED  
IT... AND  
BY DESERT STORM WE WERE ALL WHERE WE ARE  
NOW. WE  
CAN'T DO IT OURSELVES.

10 " " AND WE CAN'T ASK FOR ANYONE'S HELP EITHER, SO  
WHAT  
THE HELL DO WE **DO**...?

5.

Kurt and Jake, thoughtful.

11 Jake: WELL, KURT AND I HAVE BEEN THINKING ABOUT  
THAT. AS A  
CONTINGENCY, IF BARRACUDA DIDN'T WORK OUT.

12 Kurt: AND WHAT WE CAME UP WITH WAS THIS:

6.

Bobby and the other five staring at us, puzzled, intrigued.

13 Off: WHAT IF WE GAVE HIM A TARGET HE COULDN'T  
POSSIBLY  
SHOOT AT?

PAGE TWELVE

1.

Text page (11)

(NB no more italics)

1.

**Mr. Smith goes to the DMZ**

Stevie was a wonderful guy to have for a brother. We never fought, which I'm glad about: not just because I'd hate to have even one bad memory of him, but also because I saw other kids pick on their younger siblings, and it could be savage stuff. It might have been that we were too far apart in years for him to feel like I was any competition- what eighteen year-old, after all, would be threatened by a runt ten years his junior? But I like to think it was his heart. Stevie had a heart that, measured accurately, was around twice the size of the world.

You have to imagine Clark Kent played by Jimmy Stewart, except it was the sixties, so you can throw Art Garfunkel into the mix. Which is not to paint my brother as a golden boy; I have at least two memories of him being drunk, which I liked because all of a sudden we were both aged eight, and his friends have told me he was not averse to getting high. I'm also reliably informed he didn't go to Vietnam a virgin- something that could easily have happened, sixties or not. I was relieved to hear it. In light of what eventually befell him, learning otherwise would have killed me just a little more.

So he was no goody two-shoes, nor was he a shrinking wimp, nor some airhead of a jock. Today our heroes are rogues or even brutes; Stevie came from a time when you could simply be a decent human being and not make people bored. It sounds almost like some clever sleight of hand. At the time, it certainly seemed effortless. In fact it, was his natural good humour, tempered with a little kindness.

If it seems like I'm idealising him, perhaps I am, but I recall not one single mean or selfish act from Stevie. No one I've spoken to does. And I know this: his death was shattering, a horror that none of us came back from. It turned my stoic father all but mute, and put my mother in an early grave.

## PAGE THIRTEEN

1.

Text page (21)

That Valley Forge was a dumping ground is obvious. The term, in fact, may be too kind to describe it accurately. Stevie's letters to my father mention an almost ingrained dereliction of duty, defences left unmanned and unmaintained, widespread narcotics abuse- by, among others, a small but steady population of heroin addicts- and even hint at the suspected murder of an officer by "fragging".\* The very fact that an enlisted marine could mention such a thing in writing gives a clue as to how bad things were. Officers were normally required to read and censor the men's mail, but, whether out of fear or apathy, did not do so at Valley Forge.

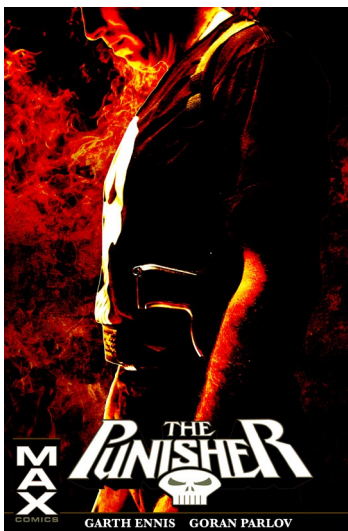
The base was a microcosm of all that had gone wrong in Vietnam by 1971. The cause, whatever it had been, was obviously lost, the job Americans had come to do was never to be finished. The whole clumsy, half-assed project would be left incomplete: but neither the U.S. government nor its military quite knew how to disengage. Lacking inspiration, they seemed to stall, and stop. The troops were left to wait. So was the firebase. So was Stevie.

He was saddened to discover what service to his country had come to mean, but he was not naïve. Almost from the first, his letters speak of the gaping, jarring lack of leadership that he and his comrades had to suffer. Without direction, they quickly embraced the more primal imperative of personal survival, and a posting to Valley Forge would amplify that urge a thousandfold. (For his part, reading of his son's predicament, Dad's disillusion with the war soon gave way to an instinct of his own: prayer.)

\* \* \* \* \*

In early April, a twenty one year-old Captain arrived at Firebase Valley Forge, beginning his third and final tour of duty. His background was said to be Marine Recon, effectively the Corps' equivalent of army special forces. Less than a month later, Stevie set down his opinion of the new officer. "If I make it out of here, Dad," he wrote, "it's going to be because of this guy."

\*Usually, but not exclusively, involving the use of a fragmentation grenade. One study estimates that as many as 20% of officer casualties in Vietnam can be attributed to fratricide.





PAGE FOURTEEN

1.  
Back on the golf course, Kurt has just hit a perfect shot. Jake watches it go, nods approvingly. Bob and the others wait, impatient.

1 Jake:                   **THAT’S** THE WAY...

2 Bobby:   WELL DON’T KEEP US IN SUSPENSE--!

2.  
Two of the others confer as Kurt and Jake turn to Bobby further back.

3 Other:    WHEN DO THEY NOT?

4 Other 2:  OH, THEY LOVE THIS SHIT.

5 Bobby:    GIVE HIM A TARGET HE CAN’T SHOOT AT, WHAT’S  
THAT  
              SUPPOSED TO MEAN?

3.  
Kurt and Jake together.

6 Kurt:                OKAY.

7 “     “       WE KNOW CASTLE’S NOT AN OUTRIGHT PSYCHOPATH,  
HE’S  
              VERY CAREFUL NOT TO HURT PEOPLE HE SEES AS  
INNOCENT.  
              THE FURTHEST HE’S GONE IN THAT DIRECTION IS TO  
ROUGH  
              UP A COUPLE OF POLICE OFFICERS—AND EVEN THAT  
WAS AS  
              A LAST RESORT.

8 Jake:                THE N.Y.P.D. THEMSELVES ACKNOWLEDGE  
THAT. SOME  
              CAPTAIN TRIED A SMEAR CAMPAIGN A YEAR OR TWO  
AGO,  
              SAID CASTLE’D PUT A COUPLE OF UNIFORMS IN  
HOSPITAL,  
              AND THE GUY’S OWN PEOPLE CAME OUT AND SAID IT  
WAS

A BUNCH OF BULLSHIT...

4.

Bobby stares at them in disbelief, points a finger.

9 Kurt:                   SO THE PUNISHER HAS HIS LIMITS. EVEN  
BETTER, HE HAS  
                              STANDARDS.

10 Bobby:  WAIT A MINUTE, IS YOUR EARTH-SHATTERING IDEA  
TO USE  
                              THE **COPS?** ARE **THEY** THE IMPOSSIBLE TARGET?

11 “    “               BECAUSE IF YOU LIKE, I CAN LAY OUT THE MILLION  
AND  
                              ONE REASONS FOR YOU WHY THIS WON'T EVEN GET  
OFF  
                              THE GROUND...!

5.

Kurt and Jake, coolly confident.

12 Kurt:    OH, BETTER THAN COPS. MUCH BETTER.

13 Jake:    A SACRED COW, AS A MATTER OF FACT.

6.

Bobby only, freezing.

14 Off:                AMERICAN SOLDIERS.



PAGE FIFTEEN

1.  
Bobby and the others are pretty stunned, Jake and Kurt cool.

1 Bobby: COME AGAIN...?

2 Jake: A SMALL DELTA UNIT. EIGHT MEN AT THE MOST.

3 Kurt: THEY GO IN, IN UNIFORM, THEY LOCATE AND  
SUBDUE CASTLE. EXTRACT HIM TO A SECURE LOCATION.

4 “ “ JOB DONE.

2.  
Bobby and the others, amazed and angry, all talking at once.

5 Other: YOU'RE OUT OF YOUR MINDS—

6 Other 2: ARE YOU FUCKING SERIOUS, I MEAN HAVE YOU  
THOUGHT—

7 Bobby: HOW ARE **DELTA** GOING TO OPERATE IN NEW YORK  
CITY?  
IN **UNIFORM?**

8 Other 3: WHAT IF THEY'RE SEEN, OR—

9 Other 4: WHAT ABOUT THE POLICE? WHAT ABOUT THE **LAW**,  
FOR  
CHRIST'S SAKE?

10 Other 5: HOW THE HELL IS IT GOING TO LOOK IF IT COMES  
OUT THAT  
**WE AUTHORISED THIS...?**

3.

Kurt raises an eye at the last speaker, who looks a little uncertain.  
Jake stays calm.

11 Kurt:     HOW'S IT GOING TO LOOK IF YOU WAKE UP TIED TO A  
CHAIR  
               WITH YOUR HOUSE BURNING DOWN AROUND YOU,  
AND  
               THE PUNISHER STROLLING OUT THE FRONT DOOR?

12 Jake:     WAR ON TERROR, IS WHAT WE SAY TO THE POLICE.  
ALL IT'LL  
               TAKE IS A MINOR CREATIVE WRITING ASSIGNMENT.

13 " "        AND I HAVE TO SAY, IT'S A LITTLE LATE TO START  
WORRYING  
               ABOUT LEGALITY, CONSIDERING HOW WAR WE'VE  
COME IN  
               THE LAST FIVE YEARS.

4.

Jake sets a golf ball on a tee, Kurt watching. Bobby and the others  
aren't too impressed by their composure.

14 Kurt:     AS FOR THEM BEING OBSERVED, THE AVERAGE JOE'S  
GOING  
               TO THINK THEY'RE A SWAT TEAM. RIFLES AND  
KEVLAR, YOU  
               KNOW...

15 Bobby:    GREAT. WHAT HAPPENS IF HE KILLS THEM ALL?

PAGE SIXTEEN

1.  
Bobby glares, arms folded again. Jake line up his shot, doesn't bother to turn.

1 Bobby: WHICH HE'S ALWAYS DONE, WITHOUT FAIL, TO  
ANYONE  
WHO'S EVER FUCKED WITH HIM...

2 Kurt: NOT TRUE, AS WE'VE ALREADY POINTED OUT.

3 Jake: THAT'S THE BEAUTY OF IT. HE WON'T FIRE ON  
U.S. TROOPS.

2.  
Jake raises his club for a swing. The others watch, less certain now, anger fading.

4 Jake: CASTLE IS MANY THINGS, BUT HE IS NOT A  
TRAITOR.

5 Kurt: HE'LL FIGHT THEM, I DON'T THINK THERE'S ANY  
DOUBT  
ABOUT THAT. BUT EIGHT MEN HALF HIS AGE... WELL.

3.  
The others consider, the nearest guy deeply troubled, hand over his mouth. Jake takes his shot, sends the ball flying down the fairway.

6 Nearest: WE'D... CHRIST, WE'D BE SENDING ARMY PERSONNEL  
ON A  
POSSIBLY LETHAL MISSION TO SERVE OUR OWN  
AGENDA, IT  
COULD **RUIN** US...

7 Jake: NEVER STOPPED US BEFORE—

4.  
Jake peers offshot, shielding his eyes against the sun, satisfied. The others seem to be reluctantly coming round to his and Kurt's plan.

8 Jake: TO THE DARING BELONGS ALL, ISN'T THAT HOW  
THE SAYING GOES?

9 Bobby: AND YOU GUYS HAVE GAMED THIS WHOLE THING  
OUT?  
YOU'VE GOT AN ACTUAL PLAN?

10 Kurt: BETTER THAN THAT, BOBBY BOY.



5.

Long shot. Kurt and Jake stroll towards one of the buggies, the others watching them go.

11 Kurt: WE'VE GOT AN ACTUAL VOLUNTEER.

12 " " COMING?

PAGE SEVENTEEN

1.

Close up on a box of Havana cigars in someone's hand, other hand holding a notecard-

PERKS OF GITMO

ENJOY- KURT

1 Off:       HMH.

2.

Widen out. We're in the office of a U.S. Army Colonel, neat and tidy with a couple of filing cabinets and numerous framed photos on the walls- usual thing, guys lined up in full uniform, or a group in combat gear in front of a helicopter. Big map of the world on one wall, pins stuck in various points around the U.S., Germany, South Korea, Saudi, Iraq, Afghanistan. Room's clean and well lit. View out the window of a parade ground, if we see it. The Colonel sits facing a lieutenant, smiling politely at an orderly, a Corporal.

2 Lieutenant:     GENERAL PERINO ASKED ME TO DELIVER THOSE  
                          PERSONALLY, SIR. HE SAID THEY WERE YOUR  
FAVORITE  
                          BRAND.

3 General: WELL, PLEASE TELL HIM I SAID THANK YOU. VERY  
MUCH.

4 "       "       ROY, I WONDER IF WE MIGHT HAVE SOME COFFEE  
FOR THE  
                          LIEUTENANT?

5 Corporal: RIGHT AWAY, SIR.

3.

The Lieutenant smiles pleasantly as the orderly leaves. Bright eyed, intelligent young man in his 20s, not a soldier so much as a yuppie in uniform. Not a prick, though. Geller.

6 Geller:     WELL, I MUST SAY, COLONEL HOWE, THIS IS ALL VERY  
                          CIVILISED. QUITE DOWN TO EARTH, ACTUALLY, FOR...  
YOU

KNOW...

4.

Big. The Colonel smiles quietly at us, amused. Tall black man in his 50s, good shape, moustache. Morgan Freeman type. A human being, not a uniformed cliché, but obviously very tough. Like Geller he wears camo fatigues rather than full uniform, no medals on his chest, just rank on his epaulettes. Sense of humour about him. A thinker. Howe.

7 Howe:     FOR SPECIAL FORCES.

8 “     “     WERE YOU EXPECTING A CAVE WITH BLOOD-  
CURDLING  
              SCREAMS ISSUING FORTH?

PAGE EIGHTEEN

1.

Geller relaxes as the Corporal returns with two coffees and cream on a tray. Howe smiles too, quiet, low key.

1 Geller:    HA HA... NO, AS A MATTER OF FACT I'D IMAGINED A  
SORT OF  
                  MEDIEVAL CASTLE. WITH SUITS OF ARMOR THAT  
SPRANG TO  
                  LIVE AND YELLED **HOO-AH**.

2 Howe:     THAT'S THE RANGERS.

3 "        "        WE DISCOURAGE DRAMA, MISTER GELLER. IN DELTA  
WE LIKE  
                  TO SAY THAT IF YOU NOTICE US AT ALL, WE'RE NOT  
DOING  
                  OUR JOB.

2.

Geller stirs cream into his coffee, smiles a little, intrigued. The orderly rises again.

4 Geller:    WHICH IS EXTREMELY ENCOURAGING, BELIEVE ME.

5 "        "        SO, ONE OF THE THINGS THE GENERAL WANTED ME  
TO ASK  
                  YOU WAS, HOW DID YOU KNOW ABOUT THIS PROBLEM  
OF HIS  
                  IN THIS FIRST PLACE? HE'S READ YOUR OUTLINE, HE  
LIKES IT  
                  VERY MUCH—BUT HE'S CURIOUS AS TO WHAT  
ACTUALLY  
                  PROMPTED IT?

3.

Howe raises an eye. Geller shrugs- what're you gonna do...

6 Howe:     WELL, YOU HAVE TO GO BACK ABOUT THREE YEARS.  
                  AROUND THE SAME LENGTH OF TIME IT'S TAKEN THE  
                  GENERAL TO READ MY OUTLINE.

7 Geller:    THE PROBLEM ONLY JUST CAME TO A HEAD,  
COLONEL. WE  
                  ARE AT WAR, AFTER ALL...



4.

Howe stops smiling, but isn't unpleasant, just calm. He reaches for a framed photo on his desk. Geller frowns, intrigued.

8 Howe: I'D HEARD.

9 " " DOES THE NAME **MARTIN VANHEIM** MEAN  
ANYTHING TO  
YOU?

10 Geller: AH... YES, IT DOES, AS A MATTER OF FACT...

11 " " HE WAS THE DELTA CAPTAIN ON, AH, ON—

5.

Howe's hand holding up the photo to show us. Vanheim (*Mother Russia*) in full uniform, smiling proudly with his arm around a pretty, happy young black woman.

12 Off: OPERATION BARBAROSSA.

13 " " HE WAS ALSO ENGAGED TO BE MARRIED TO MY  
DAUGHTER.

PAGE NINETEEN

1.

Geller stops short, awkward. Howe puts the picture down, calm, at ease.

1 Geller: OH...

2 Howe: GENERAL PERINO ASKED ME FOR A GOOD MAN. I  
SENT HIM  
CAPTAIN VANHEIM.

3 “ “ WE WERE CLOSE, OBVIOUSLY. WE TALKED ON THE  
'PHONE  
BEFORE THE MISSION BEGAN—NOT ABOUT IT, THAT  
WOULD  
HAVE BEEN A GROSS BREACH OF SECURITY. ABOUT  
WHO HE  
WAS BEING ORDERED TO WORK WITH, WHICH HAD  
HIM  
HIGHLY AGITATED.

2.

Flashback to #18: Vanheim lying dead in the snow as it slowly covers his body, filling his gaping mouth and eyes, with the lone figure of Frank disappearing into the driving blizzard in the background.

4 Caption: “FRANK CASTLE. THE PUNISHER.

5 “ “ “AND WE BOTH KNOW HOW THAT TURNED OUT,  
DON'T WE?”

3.

Geller is quietly but completely transfixed, Howe watching him with a calm but steady look, a friendly little smile.

6 Howe: WELL, YOU KNOW THE DETAILS. I CAN ONLY GUESS.

7 “ “ BUT I WAS SURPRISED TO LEARN THAT A VIGILANTE  
WAS  
INVOLVED IN A U.S. SPECIAL FORCES OPERATION, NO



WAS           MATTER HOW BLACK IT MIGHT HAVE BEEN. WHEN I  
OLD           NOTIFIED OF THE CAPTAIN'S DEATH, I CALLED A FEW  
              FRIENDS.

8 "       "       YOU KNOW HOW SOLDIERS LIKE TO TALK.

4.

Flashback to the end of #18, Frank and Fury grimly facing off with the angry Generals, the troops nervously standing by.

9 Caption: "ALL I HEARD WAS SOMETHING ABOUT A  
CONFRONTATION

ON THE TARMAC AT RHODE ISLAND. THE GENERAL  
AND HIS ASSOCIATES. CASTLE.

10 " " "COLONEL FURY WAS MENTIONED, IN THE USUAL  
NERVOUS WHISPER.

11 " " "IT SOUNDED LIKE A MAJOR FALLING-OUT."

PAGE TWENTY

1.

Howe relaxes again. Geller watches him carefully.

1 Howe: SO I GAVE IT SOME THOUGHT. GUESSED—  
CORRECTLY,  
OBVIOUSLY—THAT THERE'D SOON BE A COVERT  
INITIATIVE  
AIMED AT NEUTRALISING THE PUNISHER.

2 “ “ THAT'S WHEN I DECIDED TO PUT PEN TO PAPER.

3 Geller: IS THIS A PERSONAL THING FOR YOU...?

2.

Howe sits forward slightly, fixing Geller with a cool but intense look. He's completely calm, doesn't glare or grimace- doesn't have to.

4 Howe: I HAVE NO IDEA IF CASTLE ACTUALLY KILLED  
VANHEIM—AS  
A MATTER OF FACT, I DOUBT IT. BUT THAT ISN'T THE  
POINT.

5 “ “ THE MAN IS A STAIN ON THE REPUTATION OF THE  
UNITED  
STATES MILITARY. HE'S USED THE SKILLS HE  
LEARNED IN  
SPECIAL FORCES TO MURDER THOUSANDS. THAT  
HE'S BEEN  
ALLOWED TO RUN FREE THIS LONG, NEVER MIND BE  
EMPLOYED AS SOME KIND OF ULTIMATE  
PRACTITIONER OF  
THE ART, IS A DISGRACE.

3.

Big. Howe only, facing us with the same calmly determined gaze. He's not out to scare anyone, just make sure he's completely understood.

6 Howe: HE'S ONE OF OURS. WE TRAINED HIM.

7 “ “ AND IT'S UP TO US TO CLOSE THE BOOK ON HIM FOR  
GOOD.

4.

Geller considers carefully, not looking at Howe. Delicate moment.

8 Geller: MM.

9 " " THIS... WOULDN'T BE ABOUT TERMINATION. AT LEAST  
NOT  
RIGHT AWAY.

10 Howe: NO?

PAGE TWENTY-ONE

1.

Geller, slightly awkward, still not looking up.

1 Geller: CASTLE HAS CERTAIN MATERIAL IN HIS POSSESSION.

2 " " A TAPE. COPIES, PROBABLY. THOSE HAVE TO BE  
RECOVERED  
AS APART OF THE OPERATION, THERE CAN'T BE ANY  
DOUBT  
OR DEBATE ABOUT THAT.

3 " " AFTER THAT HE CAN DISAPPEAR.

2.

He smiles nervously at Howe, who returns a slight smile of his own.  
He's good at making Geller feel at ease.

4 Geller: WITH EXTREME PREJUDICE, IF YOU KNOW WHAT I  
MEAN.

5 Howe: I BELIEVE I'M FAMILIAR WITH THE TERM.

3.

Howe stands.

6 Howe: EXECUTION OR INCARCERATION, IT'S ALL THE SAME  
TO ME.  
THE IMPORTANT THING IS TO PUT AN END TO THIS.

7 " " WANT TO MEET THE TEAM I'VE PUT TOGETHER?

8 Geller: UH, SURE...



4.

Howe puts his cap on, completely relaxed, smiling to himself as Geller stands. Geller's pleasantly at ease, enjoying the older man's company, quite charmed by him. From where he's standing, Geller can't see Howe's smile. Nothing sinister, though.

9 Geller: YOU KNOW, COLONEL, IT'S NICE TO MEET SOMEONE  
FROM YOUR SIDE OF THINGS WHO DOESN'T FEEL THE NEED  
TO BE A HARDASS. I MEAN BEING ON THE GENERAL'S STAFF,  
MY EXPERIENCE TENDS TOWARD THE INFORMAL, BUT  
THE LAST DELTA OFFICER I MET WAS PRACTICALLY BREATHING  
FIRE AND SMOKE.

10 " " IT'S GOOD TO KNOW THAT—PEOPLE CAN RISE ABOVE  
THEIR STEREOTYPES, I SUPPOSE...

5.

Long shot as they leave.

11 Howe: I IMAGINE IT IS, LIEUTENANT.

12 " " I IMAGINE IT IS.

PAGE TWENTY-TWO

1.

Big. Eight 6x4 photos of the Generals- Jake, Kurt, Bobby, then the other five- pinned to a board. No name tags. These would be official photos, headshots, taken for their files.

2.

Frank sits in his basement, M60 dismantled on the workbench behind him. Relaxed posture, but peering intently at us. Deciding what to do. Thick file on top of the open envelope, lying on the table beside him.

CAPTION:            *TO BE CONTINUED*